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By

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2009

**The Unicorn Stays in the Picture:
Deconstructing the “Chosen One” Myth
in the Young Adult Fantasy Film**

by

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Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2009

The Report committee for Scott Gordon Miles

Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:

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in the Young Adult Fantasy Film**

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Acknowledgements

This report and the screenplay discussed herein would not have been possible without the consistent efforts and goodwill of my classmates and professors, who steered me in the right direction and always cared more for the story than my feelings. And for that, they have my eternal gratitude.

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Scott Gordon Miles, M.F.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

SUPERVISOR: Richard Lewis

This report covers the process of developing, writing and revising the original screenplay “Magic For Losers.” When famous child wizard Daphne Grimsby is abducted by villainous foes, her loser brother Darwin must reluctantly venture into a magical world to save her. The script heavily relies on the concepts and ideas evoked from the Hero’s Journey model of storytelling. I have also structured this report on the same model, as in its own way, completing a feature length screenplay is fraught with the same trials and tribulations.

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Introduction

Write what you know. Crack open any basic screenwriting tome and this is the advice you'll find, usually somewhere in the first chapter, bolded for emphasis. And while I admire the sentiment and can certainly see where the author is coming from – it's better to write something from the heart and personal rather than a bland regurgitation of flicks watched and loved, the haunting and lifeless ghost of movies past – I think I pretty much disagree with this statement. Or at least, I disagree with the common interpretation of the oft-repeated line. It's a dangerous trap for novice screenwriters, leaving them with a script that's more often than not flat and dull, meandering here and there with no real direction, but "at least it's real, man."

Well, no it's not. Because what I've learned over the last two years is that writing what you know is not a calculated formula of "I grew up in X with my crazy aunt Y who introduced me to the fascinating world of Z and that's what my script should be about." The concept of "what you know" is far more mercurial, ever shifting and changing as you experience life – the ups, the downs and the sideways kicks to the abdomen that take you by surprise. It's watching how humans interact with one another in myriad of ways that both uplift and destroy. For example, a perfect first date and a soul-crushing break-up are equally important in the world of a screenwriter, and each can be mined for the specific emotions and details to be funneled into one's next script. Stanley Kubrick once wrote that "...the author must not think of paper

and ink and words as being his writing tools, but rather that he works in flesh and feeling” (1960-61). And I feel that must be applied to any script – whether a gritty personal independent film or an epic fantasy with CGI and a cast of thousands.

But one’s writing must also include the insights gained from each previous script written. Another common bit of writing advice – one that I actually do agree with – is that you should never show anyone your work until you’ve completed at least five or six screenplays. It takes awhile to get the hang of three-act structure, character arcs and dialogue that doesn’t make the reader howl in agony. By the time you finish that sixth spec script, you’ll have not only hit your stride but also learned from the mistakes of screenplays one through five. But it doesn’t stop there. My sixth screenplay was the one that got me into this graduate program and as I began work on the seventh for my first class at the University of Texas, I realized just how much more I had to learn. What ended up in “Magic for Losers” is a culmination of everything I learned while a graduate student from eight professors and my wonderfully insightful peers. This report details the creation of this screenplay, from the initial idea to Fade Out of the revised draft.

The Call to Adventure

On the short drive to the movie theatre, I braced myself. It's not that I wasn't looking forward to seeing *Enchanted*, the 2007 fantasy film about a Disney princess thrust into the real world. But I'm admittedly not the target demographic and certainly wasn't as giddy to see it as my wife, who is by no means a Disney apologist but thought it looked "cute." Little did I know that I would walk out of the darkened theater into the bright Austin sun with the germ of an idea that would shape the next year and a half of my life.

But let's back up a bit. Back in the theater, the lights go dim and the trailers flicker onscreen, each specifically chosen for the thematic link they hold to the main feature. For the most part, they looked like cheaply-produced cash grabs hoping to ride the Harry Potter coat tails. But one trailer in particular caught my eye, a CGI-heavy fantasy called *The Spyderwick Chronicles*. The Voice Over Guy posed the following question: "What if you discovered a magical world beyond your own...and become the chosen one destined to save it?" And my brain, who is first and foremost a smart ass, immediately thought "Yeah, but what if you weren't the one chosen? That would suck." You would end up with a very different film than the one whose images flashed before me in rapid succession.

With that thought firmly implanted in my mind, I watched *Enchanted*, which turned out to be far more clever than I expected, a meta exploration of the Disney model that was both fun for kids but also worked on a level

that legally-required guardians could appreciate. I loved the revisionist, post-modern take on *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, etc. and wondered if I could do the same thing with the “chosen one” myth in fantasy films. Maybe *I* could write the next cheaply-produced Harry Potter cash grab! Or better yet, a film like *Enchanted* that works as both an example and loving parody of the genre at the same time.¹

Over the next few months, I fleshed out the idea and came up with some characters that I knew I wanted. The most organic way to portray the idea of one person being chosen to save a magic world over the other was to make them siblings. The natural rivalry that already exists could be mined for laughs before the fantasy elements were even added in to the mix. Since I wanted a strong female character (and to counter-balance the fact that almost all “chosen one” stories feature a male savior), I decided to make the chosen one the sister and the more withdrawn loser character her brother.

Since I was already playing around with the conventions of the fantasy genre, I decided to push it all across the board and devised my villains – an evil wizard and his queen – to physically resemble the grotesque Voldemort from the *Harry Potter* series and the White Witch from *The Chronicles of Narnia* but act more like petty children, constantly bickering having just gone through a nasty divorce. Other character archetypes from fantasy literature and movies would appear throughout the script, but with their familiar traits

¹ Other notable examples include *Hot Fuzz* (overblown action films) and *Galaxy Quest* (science fiction, particularly Star Trek).

tweaked and twisted for comic potential. I knew I wanted a dumb unicorn and maybe some fairies, but beyond that, nothing was set in stone.

The summer between my first and second year, I scribbled out a plot outline in the broadest of strokes, catching the main action and plot turns. I figured I would easily get the rest done in the fall semester when I would begin working on this script in earnest. As it turned out, I was dead wrong.

Refusal of the Call

There's a moment on the first day of every semester where you go around the workshop table and pitch an idea for what you plan to write. It can be a tense moment for a slightly neurotic screenwriter², because while class reaction doesn't necessarily sink a project, it's nice to know if people immediately respond to your story idea or not. So when my turn came around, I launched into the description of my magic script, pitching it as a *Princess Bride* for a more cynical generation. I did a solid enough job explaining the premise and, perhaps more importantly, it got a few laughs, so I knew I had a script I could spend the next year of my life working on.

I took the character sketches and basic plot outline devised over the summer and sat down to fill in the details, add nuance and some solid subplots. This is much harder for me than some of my classmates. It seems that most screenwriters are either plot people or character people, and I fall squarely into the character camp. I love inventing new people, with quirky habits and interesting backstories. It's finding something for them to do that's the tricky part. Yes, I know that action defines character, but I tend to explore that in the smaller moments and at this stage, I needed the larger plot turns. So at this crucial stage, rather than focus on plot, I just added more characters, hoping that it would lead to a workable plot.

² Based purely on observation the last few years, I've learned that to be a screenwriter is to be neurotic. It's only a matter of degrees. On a scale from 1 to Woody Allen, I'd say I'm only about a three.

I started with the premise that Daphne Grimsby is a world famous teenage wizard who became the “chosen one” to the magical world of Elnoria. Her younger brother Darwin feels that he should have been the one chosen. She returns from her adventures and writes best-selling books detailing her heroics. But when she is kidnapped by evil forces from Elnoria, Darwin must reluctantly go on a quest to save her.

I knew I needed a few people to surround Darwin on his trek and my brain immediately went to the most clichéd option available: two classmates from the posh private school he attends. Melora was the geeky fan girl who loved the Daphne Grimsby books and had a crush on Darwin. Willoughby was the opposite, a bully who picked on Darwin for his connection to something as girly as fairies and unicorns. It seemed that this trio would provide a lot of witty banter and the Darwin/Melora teenage romance could serve as a subplot of sorts.

I also further developed the antagonists in the script, complicating the love/hate relationship between recently divorced dark wizard Gorloch and his demon queen Jezebeth³ by adding another character, the Lord of Death. He would function as Jezebeth’s new suitor, creating a comic love triangle for the villains to deal with while attempting to destroy the world. Plot-wise, I knew I wanted the audience to believe, as Darwin initially does, that Gorloch is behind Daphne’s abduction. It’s only once he arrives in Elnoria and

³ After doing some research on demon names in various religions, Gorloch and Jezebeth were by far my favorites so they stuck. Daphne Grimsby is the name of a British research scientist whose name I discovered while working in a call center many years ago, trying to register people for a medical seminar. I’ve collected all sorts of interesting names from my time in the call center.

confronts Gorloch that he discovers the dark wizard has fallen into a deep depression after the divorce. The Lord of Death is the true villain, hoping to reshape the world in his image.

I played around with the plot quite a bit, debating whether or not I could kill Daphne off, even if I planned on using magic to revive her. The Harry Potter books got increasingly darker as they went on and the young adult audience is definitely able to process more mature themes than in previous generations. Although Daphne does die in the first treatment (provided in Appendix B), I eventually decided to not go quite that dark. If I wanted to mine emotional depths then I would find those moments in the strained sibling relationship rather than a contrived death scene.

Overall, the plotting at this early stage of the project was far too simplistic. I was unhappy with the direction I was going and felt that the whole script was littered with more clichés than not. Staring at the computer screen at 2 AM one night, contemplating unicorns and elves and pixie dust, I wondered if I should just pack it in and start on a new script. Maybe all this fantasy world building was simply beyond me.

Crossing the First Threshold

If it weren't for my classmates, you wouldn't be reading this report. Or rather, it would be discussing some other screenplay, maybe an indie comedy where I played to my strengths and stayed in my box. But they all genuinely liked my original pitch and believed in my ability to spin that into a wonderful script. I've been told often by professors at UT that my group of seven writers seem to have bonded more closely than the students of years past. There's no sense of competition or rivalry, just an honest desire to make each one of us the best writer we can be. I trusted them even when I didn't trust myself, and so I dove back into the script, looking for new ways to pull out a decent plot from the mess I created on the first pass.

Talking it out with the professor helped. While he had many ideas that would have spun the tale off in a wildly different direction from the pseudo-satire I wanted to write, he did help me ground a lot of the concepts and take out the ones that didn't work. The posh private school was gone, because as he put it, "School is boring." And I also hit upon the idea of giving Darwin a lifestyle directly opposed to Daphne's. If she lived by magic, then he would pursue science. This was a fascinating idea to me, the duality of the two concepts and the notion that science was simply magic that could be explained. And science has so many interesting fields of study that Darwin could use to his advantage in the magical world. This opened up a world of possibilities and greatly helped me find a central idea upon which to hang the entire movie: magic vs. science.

I revised my entire act one to reflect this new theme, adding a subplot surrounding Darwin preparing for a national science fair. He would build a proton accelerator using spare parts from kitchen appliances, a device which could later be used to defeat the evil forces of Elnoria. Willoughby morphed from a teenage bully into a pompous adult who decries Daphne as a fake and writes a book denying the existence of magic. Of course, Darwin is sympathetic to his claims (though he knows them to be false), which puts him squarely at odds with Melora, still the ever-chirpy fan girl. The big scene where Darwin gets sucked into the magical world would take place at the science fair itself, moments before he's scheduled to give his big presentation. He tries to avoid going but he and Melora are whisked away against their will by the fairies that need his help in rescuing Daphne.

There are several problems with this scenario, many of which did not become clear until much later in the process. Primarily, Darwin never makes the choice to go to the magical world himself and therefore all agency is out of his hands. Once I actually got into the pages, I would address this by abandoning the science fair altogether. While science was still the motivating force in Darwin's life, he now meets Melora at a screening for Daphne's new movie, falls in love and tries to impress her by arranging a meeting with Daphne. The refigured act one heavily focused on the Darwin/Melora teenage romance (another misstep that would eventually be corrected) and Willoughby was excised altogether.

At this point in the process, I also decided to use the Hero's Journey to help forge my plot. Popularized by writer Joseph Campbell, this story model

has been used in Hollywood many times over, most notably by George Lucas in his *Star Wars* saga. The same themes can be seen in almost all fantasy films, so I felt this would be the perfect model for my script. Rather than a rigid formula, the Hero's Journey details the basic building blocks often found in quest-type stories found in literature both ancient and modern. It can be used as a road map to find your story, using the elements that work for your particular tale and discarding those that do not. Whenever I got lost in the writing, I could always come back to the Hero's Journey and find another way to tackle my problems.

The script still had a few issues and plot holes to work out, but I was happy with the direction things were going. I ended the semester with over the half the script completed and a solid plan for moving forward into uncharted territory. The characters were popping, the jokes were hitting and a new star was born. Hazelnut the unicorn, with his tendency towards physical comedy and general stupid demeanor, quickly became a class favorite. I spent my Christmas break fleshing out some more scenes and getting the script prepped to enter the rewriting course in the spring.

Tests, Allies and Enemies

There's an episode of *The Simpsons* in which Marge becomes a member of the Springfield police department. During training, Chief Wiggum makes a promise to the recruits to "...tear you down, build you back up, tear you down again, break for lunch, and if there's time, build you up again."

That pretty much sums up how I feel about rewriting in general and the course I took in the spring was set up to do just that. We took our script and rather than focus on scenes or dialogue, we broke the stories down to their most basic levels and started from scratch. During workshop, we poked holes in our previously solid ideas and often realized the foundations were not as strong as we had thought. Again, this process would have been much slower and more agonizing without the help and guidance from my peers and professor.

It was immediately apparent from this intense scrutiny at the story level that I had problems ahead. Aside from the aforementioned focus on the romantic subplot that distracted from the uniqueness of the magic world, the story was also too rushed in the beginning. I was trying to cram several ideas in a short amount of pages and it was time to step back and ask some tough questions. At the behest of the class and against my better judgment, I removed the opening scene in which Darwin and Daphne first discover the portal to Elnoria. While I bemoaned this at first, I soon realized it was the best decision.⁴ Going on the assumption that the target audience would have

⁴ I eventually found a way to reinsert a truncated version of the scene later in the script, where it ended up being much more emotionally satisfying.

at least a passing familiarity with the Harry Potter mythos, I could use a clever short hand to set up the world of the characters without belaboring the details.

The central plot of Darwin rescuing his sister from evil forces remained, but the Lord of Death was cut from the story to give more time to focus on the crumbling relationship of Gorloch and Jezebeth. The question of whether or not they might reunite - a typical rom-com conceit - seemed funny played against the apocalyptic plot to destroy the world. But what of this dastardly plot? Earlier versions of the script cast the now removed Lord of Death as the main villain. If Jezebeth was now in charge, she needed a new scheme. Enter the Bloomsday Device, which would detonate and turn everything ugly into something beautiful. I could make a statement about narcissism and shallow behavior. But that really didn't tie into my main theme of magic vs. science, a fact that I conveniently and willfully ignored.

At this point, I felt a bit stuck and needed further inspiration. I delved into a few fantasy films that worked as great genre examples. *The Princess Bride* is a sly, clever take on mideval fantasy and definitely holds up twenty years on.⁵ I also watched the light-hearted fantasy *Stardust* (which reminded me that I needed far more visual displays of magic in my script) and the original inspiration for the script, *The Spyderwick Chronicles* (a fun but ultimately clichéd modern take on the young adult fantasy film). But perhaps my biggest inspiration during this time was not a fantasy film at all, but a cartoon series on television geared towards adults. Adult Swim's *The*

⁵ And in fact, I've yet to meet anyone who dislikes this movie.

Venture Bros. started as a satire of 60's adventure cartoons like Johnny Quest and quickly became a cult favorite. More than anything, what I love about the show is its depiction of the villains, painted as petty idiots and constantly distracted by the boring minutiae of life rather than the job of taking over the world. They were just as likely to talk about watching *Lost* as showing off their new death ray contraption. This was exactly the kind of convention-bending humor I wanted in my script, pointing out the absurdity of the "chosen one" myth clichés while at the same time living in that world. My earlier joking aside, the last thing I wanted to write was another Harry Potter cash-grab. This script had to be wildly different to set itself apart from the imitators while still appealing to the fans of the genre.

The rewriting process was intense and before the end of the semester, the script outline went through at least six wildly different drafts. I removed the Bloomsday Device entirely (which I eventually deemed too silly) and added a few new characters to emphasize the fantasy aspects of the script. The pirate fox Admiral Todd became one of Daphne's most trusted allies. I needed someone to betray Daphne and facilitate her abduction, so I invented Leilani, leader of the deadly Fairy Assassin Squad. I conceived a new opening set in the orphanage that was universally despised by the workshop. Daphne's character underwent major makeovers, switching from savior to villain to diva before I settled on misunderstood hero.

The one aspect that never seemed to change through the various drafts was Darwin's faith in science over magic. It seemed to be the one solid idea that could never leave. Which is, of course, why it had to go.

Supreme Ordeal

“Kill your babies.” That quote, usually attributed to William Faulkner, is endlessly repeated by writers because it sounds cool. It’s also happens to be true. No matter how amazing a scene may be on the page, if it doesn’t ultimately serve your story, it has to go. There are exceptions of course, especially in comedies, and I had a scene that in my heart, I just knew was an exception.

It took place in Act One, after Melora gets angry at Darwin and he has to chase after her. I can’t tell you why I liked it so much, it was half a page long with very little dialogue. It just felt...right. But in the rewriting process, it became clear I no longer needed such a scene. I tried moving that beloved moment around to other spots, but it always stuck out. Eventually, I realized I could always just put that scene in another story in the future, made my peace and removed it from the script.

But this got me thinking back over the entire script, wondering if perhaps there were other moments that I’d been clinging to but served no greater story purpose. The new draft of the screenplay had stalled out around page 30 and things just weren’t clicking. I needed to shake things up a bit and was ready to start knocking out the foundation.

I recall sitting in a coffee shop, laptop open, staring at my most recent outline.⁶ Across from me sat one of my classmates, working feverishly on his

⁶ I tend to do this a lot. Just stare at the screen, waiting for the script to finish itself. As of this writing, it has not produced any workable results.

own script. We often met over the summer to continue discussing the projects we originated in class, keeping the workshops going, no matter how informal. An idea popped into my head that seemed too radical, too much work, but I threw it out there anyway. "What if I took out the whole science vs. magic theme? Do I even need the science stuff?" And my friend looked up, thought it over in about three seconds and said "Nope."

And suddenly, it was as though a great weight was lifted and the writer's block disappeared. Freeing myself of the science aspects gave me a freedom to explore all the magic stuff that drew me to the project in the first place. It streamlined the entire story and put everything into perspective. I think I got lost trying to think of something clever or different to say and forgot to just write a simple story, well told.

Resurrection

I immediately went through the outline and gleefully removed any reference to science. Of course, this completely changed my original ending. After Jezebeth used her evil powers in our world to destroy technology, return mankind to the Dark Ages and then rule over the land with black magic, Darwin was supposed to defeat her with science. Indeed, it was a very literal interpretation of the magic vs. science theme. Elements of that remained in the final version, but now it was all magic and Darwin instead used ingenuity and relied on help from his new friends to save the day. I feel this is a much stronger ending and ultimately more crowd-pleasing than a celebration of science.

The removal of science also helped the script become more focused on characters than plot. The central relationship in the film is between the two siblings, and for at least half of the movie, they do not share the screen together. I had to make sure you immediately got the Daphne/Darwin antagonism before she gets abducted and kept that tension going on the quest to save her. By the time Darwin rescues Daphne just after the midpoint, the audience should be expecting the sparks to fly upon their reunion. And while the rest of the film would be primarily concerned with the characters saving the world, the emotional resonance would come from the moments where Darwin and Daphne come to terms with their differences. Without science, Darwin needed a new reason to hate magic and it now sprang from his jealousy of his sister's role as the "chosen one." He feels that

it should have been him and he's probably right. Both he and Daphne have their own unique issues surrounding her role and it's only at the end, where they are able to work together, that true salvation is possible.

I also got some great advice from Richard Lewis, my thesis supervisor, to switch around one of the plot points regarding Gorloch. Originally I had him resist the temptation to betray Darwin and the others only to turn in Act Three, only becoming heroic at the last possible moment. I flipped that idea, making him betray them at the first opportunity he got and then redeeming himself in the end after realizing how much Darwin trusted him.

I recently finished my revised draft of "Magic for Losers" and the process of writing this report has made me realize how much a story will change from first inkling to final draft.

Conclusion

While “Magic for Losers” is my thesis script and the subject of this report, I would be remiss to not discuss the other projects I completed in the MFA program at the University of Texas. If given enough time, I could write an entirely new report on what I learned as a student. Rather, I will quickly summarize my experience in broad strokes and how those concepts and ideas fed into this thesis script.

One of the highlights of my time at UT was the chance to meet David Mamet and attend a lunch where he answered our questions on screenwriting. In addition to learning that he considers *Galaxy Quest* to be a perfect movie and film school a waste of time and money, Mamet also boiled his thoughts on writing down to three basic questions that must be answered for all major characters. What do they want? What happens if they don’t get it? Why now? If you can’t answer those three questions then you have no story. I’ve applied that rigorous test to each of my characters and if I came up with blanks on any question, I refigured elements until it all worked. I’ve included my character profiles (in Appendix A) and show my answers to each of Mamet’s essential questions.

I also learned that in order to find inspiration for our own stories, it’s crucial to see how other filmmakers have handled similar topics. For each of my screenplays, I picked at least one film that felt related in either tone, style, characters or plot. I’d study the film (reading the script itself if available) and break it down scene by scene, noting the purpose of each

individual scene and how that moved the story along and fit into the overall structure. This helped immensely with “Magic for Losers,” especially since I didn’t want to copy any of the clever visual bits from movies like *Harry Potter* or *Stardust*.

Another particularly useful skill I picked up in the television writing course is the idea of “Option A, B, and C.” The thinking goes like this: if you encounter a problem, the first solution you come up with is probably the easiest, the one that most screenwriters would also find. It’s usually full of cliché and a combination of solutions seen in other movies. This is Option A. If one were to take it a step further, adding a layer of subtext or subverting the expectation a little, we would call this Option B. It’s not particularly brilliant, but at least it’s not a cliché. But spend a little more time brainstorming and thinking outside the norm and one may find Option C, a solution that solves the problem in a wholly unique way. It is the final option that I always strive for and another reason writing multiple drafts of an outline is crucial to writing truly original work. You eventually weed out all the Option A moments in favor of something far better.

During the development phase of screenwriting, I often found myself finding it difficult to balance character and the pacing of plot. In the past, I’d simply focus on characters to the detriment of the story. But I eventually learned of the “Reel Breakdown” method, which came in handy during the outlining phase. Films are delivered to theaters and projected using fifteen minute reels, spliced together seamlessly. But thinking about our films in terms of these fifteen minute reels opened up a whole new way to structure

the film. Each reel would have a beginning, middle and end and work as a segue into the next reel. If I had used this method from the outset of my "Magic for Losers" project, it would have saved me many headaches. As it turned out, I discovered it halfway through the process and it made the plotting of the final versions easier and more fun.

The adaptation class we took in the second year of the program was a revelation to me, not just because it gave me a solid grounding on how to adapt short stories and longer works to the screen but because it also made me wonder how I could use those skills towards rewriting. Looking at an earlier draft as a separate work of literature, I could ask myself more objectively: What works? What doesn't? It gave me a freer sense of editing and I ultimately ended up with a much better script.

I also had the good fortune to take a producing class in the RTF department. While I do have some experience shooting short films and producing on a very low-budget scale, the class opened my eyes to the often harsh realities on the business side of the film industry. Studio executives are looking to make money first and interesting stories second. This is, of course, a generalization and there are smaller production companies in the US and abroad who focus on more independent films. But I know always have a little voice in the back of my head reminding me that I need to know who my audience is for a particular project. I will write a different story for mainstream audiences than I would for the arthouse crowd. Neither route is better or worse, but it is a decision that cannot be made lightly. For most of my life, I've been writing weird little indie films and "Magic for Losers" is my

first real attempt at writing a high-concept, big budget film. With this firmly in mind, many of the story decisions I stumbled across along the way were made for me.

These last two years in the MFA program at the University at Texas have allowed me to complete three feature films, a spec episode of NBC's "The Office," and an original pilot for a television series. I also spent two semesters as a teaching assistant, imparting what I've learned to undergraduate film students and deepening my appreciation for the art of screenwriting. Upon graduation my goals are many and my path is unclear. I plan to immediately start work on a brand new screenplay with a friend, one that we hope to package with a business plan and take to the American Film Market to raise partial financing. The pilot I wrote in the television course eventually morphed into a web series that was recently picked up for distribution by Koldcast.tv and is currently downloadable by TiVo. We're presently in pre-production on a second season and await news on a production grant that would give us the funds to begin production. My ultimate goal is to write and direct my own features, but I know that it will take many years of hard work and lucky breaks to get to that point. In the meantime, I am content to work on my smaller projects and teach what I can to anyone who will listen. Follow your dreams. Stay true to yourself and write what's important to you. Make a difference. Make them laugh. And most importantly, write what you know.

Appendix A: Character Profiles

Daphne Grimsby, 17 – Darwin’s older sister, arrogant Chosen One™ of the magical world of Elnoria (yes, she had that officially trademarked). After saving Elnoria from wicked forces, she came back to our world and wrote a best-selling book detailing her adventures. She was an overnight sensation, spawning a series of novels, toys, video games, lunch boxes, etc. and is now worth millions. But the constant burden of being the savior to entire world weighs her down and she’s missing out on doing normal kid stuff (like prom).

1. What does she want? Find balance between fame and normal life.
2. What happens if she doesn’t get it? Trapped in the spotlight forever.
3. Why now? Hero life getting old.

Darwin Grimsby, 15 – Our reluctant hero who’s sworn off magic, partly because of living in the shadow of his older sister. Since she’s become famous, he works thanklessly as her personal assistant: grabbing coffee, arranging book signings, whatever her latest whim. Out of spite, he’s never read any of his sister’s books. He longs to find a purpose and get out of his sister’s shadow.

1. What does he want? To find his purpose.
2. What happens if he doesn’t get it? Be in sister’s shadow forever.
3. Why now? Daphne has been abducted.

Melora, 15 – Daphne’s number one super fan. She knows all the books backwards and forwards and is an expert of all things Elnoria. She definitely projects her own feelings onto Daphne, escaping into the novels when her crummy life gets worse.

1. What does she want? To impress Daphne (fan worship).
2. What happens if she doesn’t get it? Be a loser forever.
3. Why now? Daphne has been abducted.

Gorloch – The Gargoyle King, an ancient wizard fallen on hard times. He was once the most evil villain in Elnoria, scorching the lands and laying waste to the forces of good. But he lost his confidence after Daphne defeated him and his wife eventually left him, sending him further down the spiral of despair.

1. What does he want? To get back with his ex-wife.
2. What happens if he doesn’t get it? Continued shame.
3. Why now? Darwin’s arrival.

Jezebeth – The demon queen with a plan to destroy Elnoria (and Gorloch’s ex-wife). Once she has the Amulet (which is the key to passing between worlds), she can come to our world and destroy it. Her plan: take away all technology, thereby sending humanity into the dark ages and ruling with her evil magic.

1. What does she want? To rule the world.
2. What happens if she doesn’t get it? Death.
3. Why now? Daphne (and the Amulet) are within her grasp.

Hazelnut – The amazingly dumb unicorn, always hungry.

1. What does he want? Food.
2. What happens if he doesn't get it? Hunger.
3. Why now? Butterflies.

Mr. Tufnil – Grumpy faun who guards the gateway between worlds.

Admiral Todd – Blue and silver fox with an eye-patch. He's a pirate king, captain of the skyship Revenge.

Leilani – Once Daphne's most trusted ally and leader of the deadly Fairy Assassin Squad. She later betrays Daphne and joins forces with Jezebeth.

CHARACTER ARCS

Darwin – Jealous of sister → Finds his role in the greater scheme

Daphne – Arrogant → Humble (for her anyway)

Melora – Blind devotion → Becomes her own person

Gorloch – Insecure, broken → Self-confident

Appendix B: Evolution of the Script

"Magic For Losers" Treatment #1 – 09/07/08

ACT ONE

Nestled in the English countryside lies Brigsbyshire Orphanarium, home to siblings DAPHNE (17) and DARWIN (16) GRIMSBY. Their lives are changed forever upon discovering the pathway to a secret enchanted world: Daphne is hailed as the long-prophesied "Chosen One" and is whisked away into the enchanted world. Darwin is left behind.

Montage – cut between Daphne saving the enchanted world and our world, where she's become a celebrity. Movies are made about her adventures and she now has the money to rent a trendy loft and send Darwin to a fancy private school.

However, Darwin forever lives in her shadow. At school, he's picked on by WILLOUGHBY (16) because of his association with the enchanted world (albeit through his sister). Darwin brushes off the friendship of MELORA (16), a bespectacled awkward girl from school. She's the biggest of fan of the Daphne Grimsby books, a walking encyclopedia of the enchanted world.

Daphne is kidnapped by unseen evil forces, largely due to a mistake that Darwin makes. Creatures from the enchanted world start showing up at school, pleading with Darwin to help rescue his sister. He shrugs it off but Melora senses that something is wrong. The mystical creatures appear in increasingly larger numbers until Darwin reluctantly decides to go, just as

Willoughby picks a fight with him. In the ensuing confusion, the fantasy creatures pull all three children into Enchanted world.

ACT TWO

Melora informs the group that Daphne would have been kidnapped by her arch-rival, the DARK WIZARD, who lives in the castle atop a dark mountain. Willoughby wants nothing to do with this adventure and refuses to tag along, instead opting to stay behind and wait for them to return.

Darwin and Melora reach the Dark Wizard's castle but find it empty. They soon discover the Dark Wizard and after a brief half-hearted skirmish, learn that he is all alone, depressed, in a mid-life crisis since his EVIL QUEEN left him for a younger, more powerful wizard, the LORD OF DEATH. Dark Wizard is in no mood at all for black sorcery. Upon hearing that Daphne has been kidnapped and Darwin is out to stop the machinations of the Lord of Death, the washed-up Dark Wizard decides to come with them. Melora is skeptical (who wouldn't be?) but Darwin sees that he might be useful.

Daphne sits in her dank cell and learns of the Lord of Death's plan: incredibly narcissistic, he wants to destroy anything more beautiful than him and then reshape the world in his image. He means to start with Daphne. The ugly creatures of this world (trolls, goblins, etc.) support this plan and rally behind him, forming an alliance.

Darwin, Melora and Dark Wizard travel across the land, escaping trouble and encountering fantasy elements along the way. Excitement will build and we'll

see Darwin start to think for himself, to solve problems, definitely not the way Daphne would have done things (as Melora reminds him). We also start to question Dark Wizard's motives. Something not right about him...

Meanwhile, Willoughby has become bored and starts exploring a bit, coming across a small group of woodland creatures (Note: no animals talk in this film).

Upon reaching the lair of Lord of Death, Darwin outsmarts the security system (using logic rather than magic) and the group rescues Daphne, who is understandably unhappy about seeing her old nemesis Dark Wizard. She barely thanks Darwin for saving her, brushes him off and tells him to go back home. "I've got it from here..."

But Darwin has come too far to just go home. He's changing, and although not ready to admit it, enjoys the adventure and fantasy. He and the group continue on after her, and just as she's about to defeat the Lord of Death, they stumble in and everything falls apart. At this decisive moment, Dark Wizard betrays the group in a bid to impress the Evil Queen (who's been feeling quite ignored by the vain Lord of Death). Again, it's Darwin's fault as he's helped Dark Wizard build back up his confidence along the journey. Dark Wizard seemingly kills Daphne, Lord of Death escapes and Darwin and Melora barely get out alive.

ACT THREE

Darwin vows to avenge his sister and with the help of Melora (and Willoughby, who has made himself king of the woodland creatures and trained them to fight – or something less lame), he must fight both the Dark Wizard and the Lord of Death, who now battle each other for the love of the Evil Queen. Darwin also manages to bring his sister back to life and with a renewed bond, they work together to save the day.

The film ends as Darwin, Melora, Willoughby and Daphne return to their world. Although entitled to it, Darwin chooses not to share in the fame, but is content to have grown up and changed for the better. Ultimate lesson: You don't have to be "chosen" in order to do great things.

"Magic For Losers" Treatment #2 – 01/25/09

ACT ONE

Darwin Grimsby sneaks out of the Brigbyshire Orphanarium. His older sister Daphne catches him, implores him to come back in before they get kicked out of another orphanage. But Darwin slips away into the night, off into the dark woods nearby.

When Daphne finds Darwin in the woods, he's failed at trying to cast a magic spell. She yells at him, there's no such thing as magic. But when she throws his spell book into the fire, a portal opens and fairies spill out. Darwin is amazed and Daphne is freaked out. An elderly faun named Mr. Tufnil appears, informs them that Daphne is the "chosen one" and must come immediately to save the magic world of Elnoria. Darwin is pissed, he's the

one who's into magic, not her. Daphne goes through the portal, leaving Darwin alone. Worst night ever.

Daphne in the land of Elnoria battling the evil dark wizard Gorloch and his demon queen Jezebeth. She uses magic to defeat them.

Back in London, Daphne's at a bookstore doing a reading of the books she wrote detailing her adventure. Hundreds of rabid fans. She's become a real-life Harry Potter, super famous. Darwin has become relegated to being her personal assistant. While making a run to get her coffee, Darwin bumps into Melora, love at first sight. He starts to flirt but gets pulled away to deal with his sister.

Daphne wants to leave and go to the trendy nightclub, ditching both the signing and her scheduled meeting the winner of the Grimsby essay contest. She instructs Darwin to reschedule with the winner, probably some chump anyway. It turns out to be Melora, who's crushed at the news.

Daphne and Darwin leave and hop in the limo. As it drives away, Darwin spots Melora walking down the sidewalk. He hops out and chases after her. They walk back through the city, on the underground and back to her suburban neighborhood (kinda slummy). Darwin promises to get Daphne to a lunch with Melora, as an apology for a ruined evening. Melora will meet them at the park tomorrow.

Next morning – Darwin awakes to find his sister gone. Note on the fridge “Gone to save Elnora again. Be back in fortnight with another best-selling book!” This of course ruins everything with Melora.

Darwin meets Melora in the park and can’t bring himself to disappoint her yet again. He stalls and suddenly the portal to Elnoria opens. Fairies appear with the news that his sister has been kidnapped. He must come at once! Darwin doesn’t want to go. Not my problem, he thinks. While he’s arguing with the fairies, Melora stares in amazement at the portal to the world she’s read about and idolized. Without hesitation, she jumps through. Now Darwin has the motivation he needs and goes through the portal.

We’re in a small medieval village, greeted by Mr. Tufnil who fills Darwin in on the situation. Daphne was indeed kidnapped by dark forces. Melora is starstruck at the sight of Tufnil and takes his picture. In fact, she’s taking pictures of everything.

Tufnil tells them to hurry, Daphne is in grave danger. Gorloch will stop at nothing to destroy Daphne, his archnemesis. Tufnil offers them a unicorn for the journey, but this turns out not to be the beautiful Ambrosia but the half-retarded one, Hazelnut, whose horn is stuck in a tree when we first meet him.

On the journey to the mountain where Gorloch's dark castle looms, Melora warns Darwin (who has never read the books out of spite) about the dark wizard and his soul-stealing, bloodthirsty ways.

They reach the castle but it's empty. No alarms, no sentry. Afraid it's a trap, they cautiously make their way to the throne room, only to discover Gorloch, passed out drunk wearing nothing but a robe and boxers. Looks like hell. He awakens abruptly with a massive hangover and assumes Darwin and Melora are assassins come to kill him. When assured that's not the case, Gorloch explains his current state: his demon queen left him after he was defeated by Daphne. It broke up their marriage. It appears that Jezebeth is the one who has kidnapped Daphne and if so, Gorloch may be the key to stopping her. So despite him being a drunken shell of his former self, Darwin convinces him to join the group.

ACT TWO

Jezebeth in her Ice Fortress monologues to a captive Daphne about her plans to take over Elnoria and remake it in her image – everything will be shiny, perfect and beautiful – using a Bloomsday Device.

Upon learning that Darwin has a unicorn, Gorloch uses a flight spell but the most Hazelnut can do is hover a few feet off the ground. He was broken when I got him, says Darwin.

Darwin, Melora and Gorloch lead Hazelnut through the countryside. They talk about Daphne and the books come up in conversation. Gorloch is horrified to learn that Daphne has written about him in her world. Daphne basically ruined his career and marriage and is profiting from it as well. Meanwhile, Hazelnut accidentally runs across a butterfly and plays with it (which is bad; Jezebeth has many animal spies, including butterflies, kittens and bunnies). This soon causes a pink bunny stampede, millions of 'em. Gorloch tries to use magic to create a force field around our heroes but his magic is weak; since the divorce he hasn't really practiced much. At the last moment, Darwin saves them by using a bit of magic (despite his earlier insistence that no magic would be used).

That night over a campfire, Darwin and Gorloch bond over their shared dislike of Daphne. They trade stories of the various times she has screwed them over, each story one-upping the last. Darwin wins with the story of how she turned him into a girl to have a shopping partner. Melora doesn't like this anti-Daphne sentiment and definitely doesn't trust Gorloch as part of the traveling party. She does not sleep that night.

Next morning, they check the map in Melora's copy of the Daphne's novel. There's a shortcut to Jezebeth's Ice Fortress through a valley. Gorloch refuses to go down there, visibly shaken. He claims that path leads to the

most vile spot in all of Elnoria. But he's voted down and they trek down into the valley to find...

A Daphne Grimsby shrine. Faithful pilgrims come from all over to pay respects. The whole place is like a tacky carnival, little dolls for sale, overpriced garments.

They get into trouble with a nightmare squirrel (obviously needs a more clever name). This creature is cute and small until you get closer and it morphs into whatever the beholder fears most. They defeat it but Melora has a mini-breakdown. This is nothing like the books. It's dangerous. She could get killed!

Soon after, Darwin and group reach the Ice Fortress and enter unnoticed thanks to Gorloch. Darwin rescues Daphne, who is initially shocked to learn that Gorloch is working on her side now (MIDPOINT).

Actually, Daphne is pissed that Darwin is here. She got kidnapped on purpose to infiltrate Jezebeth's ice fortress. Darwin has ruined that, and in their arguing (while making their way to the Bloomsday Device) Darwin accidentally sets it off.

Meanwhile, Gorloch catches a glimpse of his ex-wife and falls back in love, and we get the feeling he might sacrifice his new found friends at the chance to win her back. They barely escape alive.

The Bloomsday Device has started destroying parts of Elnoria. It's like a pulsating ooze that covers everything in its path, turning everything shiny and clean. Anything ugly becomes a statue, including Mr. Tufnil. Flowers spring from his stiff body.

Daphne leads the group through an underground ice cave. Once they reach the surface, Daphne begins making plans to save the day. She tells Darwin to go home. But Darwin has come this far and done pretty well for himself. He's not a bad leader. Darwin gives big speech about how we can't rely on chosen ones, that all great movements in history we're lots of individuals who came together to accomplish something bigger than themselves. "We're all the chosen ones." But no one listens, everyone sides with Daphne (even Melora). Darwin decides to chart his own plan of action, goes off alone with Hazelnut. Melora gives him a copy of a Daphne book, just in case.

That night, at a valley encampment where Daphne's fairy army prepares for battle, Daphne and Melora talk about Darwin, magic, etc. Gorloch sneaks away.

Darwin and Hazelnut approach a small cottage deep within the Infinite Forest. The inhabitant - a grizzled old man - ambushes them. Once inside the cottage, Darwin realizes old man is his future self.

Gorloch approaches Jezebeth, tries to win her back. She makes a deal with him. He gives up the location of Daphne's camp.

After an awkward chat, Darwin leaves his future self with some new knowledge that will save the day. As he rides away, he turns back but the cottage is gone.

Morning. Darwin rides in to find Daphne's army encampment destroyed. He pulls out the book, has to read it. Gets an idea of where they're headed.

ACT THREE

Everyone has been captured and are imprisoned (including Gorloch - Jezebeth just used him to get Daphne). Darwin saves them for real this time.

The final battle. Daphne and Darwin use their respective talents, working together. Melora does her thing. Gorloch sacrifices himself to save them. Jezebeth is defeated.

Our heroes are at Daphne Con. Daphne has written her new book in which she shares the glory with Darwin and Melora. Darwin has written a thesis on the correlation between magic and science and Melora has published a book with all of the photos she took while in Elnoria. Happily ever after for all.

"Magic For Losers" Treatment #3 – 04/21/09

ACT ONE

Reel 1: Darwin and Daphne at odds

1. Action sequence of Daphne in Elnoria, as she battles the evil dark wizard Gorloch and his demon queen Jezebeth. They are formidable foes, but she defeats them (like last time only funnier).
2. Daphne is doing a reading at DaphneCon. Huge crowds in costumes, eating up her every word. We see movies and books and toys galore.
3. Darwin (her brother and assistant) on his way back from getting her coffee. He bumps into super-fan Melora, who couldn't afford the high-priced ticket. Love at first sight. Darwin says he can get her in, but the bouncer doesn't buy his story that he's the brother.
4. Darwin finds another way in, gets Melora inside.
5. Daphne wants to ditch the boring signing, go clubbing instead. Darwin wants to impress Melora, tries to arrange a meeting but Daphne refuses.
6. Darwin breaks the news to Melora, who thinks it was all a set-up, that he was using Daphne to score chicks. So not cool. She storms off.

Reel 2: Darwin forced to be a hero

7. Darwin and Melora walk back through the city, on the underground and back to her suburban neighborhood (kinda slummy). He's charming and witty, tells her about his love for science. She explains why she loves the Daphne books so much. Darwin asks Melora to give him another chance to meet Daphne, she reluctantly accepts.
8. Darwin begs his sister to help him. Just meet with Melora to prove I'm not a liar. But no can do. Daphne is being called back to Elnoria to deal with a situation. There's trouble brewing in Elnoria. She hops into a portal and is gone!
9. The portal to Elnoria opens. The fox appears with the news that his sister has been kidnapped. As Darwin argues with the fox about what to do, Melora stands transfixed, looking through the portal. The chance of a lifetime. She jumps through. He has no choice but to grab the amulet and follow her in. Whoosh!

ACT TWO

Reel 3: Darwin is introduced to Elnoria

10. We're in a small village, greeted by Mr. Tufnil who fills Darwin in on the situation. Daphne was indeed kidnapped by dark forces. Melora is star struck at the sight of Tufnil and takes his picture. In fact, she's taking pictures of everything.
11. Tufnil tells them to hurry. Melora immediately takes charge. She knows the way, the map of Elnoria all but burned in her brain. Tufnil

offers them a unicorn for the journey, but this turns out not to be the beautiful Ambrosia but the half-retarded one, Hazelnut.

12. On the journey to the mountain where Gorloch's dark castle looms, Melora warns Darwin (who has never read the books out of spite) about the dark wizard and his soul-stealing, bloodthirsty ways.
13. They reach the castle but soon find Gorloch to be a shell of his former self. When Gorloch learns that Darwin plans to rescue Daphne and defeat Jezebeth, he offers his help. He wants to see his ex-wife humiliated. Darwin welcomes the assistance but Melora thinks it's a bad idea.

Reel 4: The quest to rescue Daphne

14. Daphne in a prison cell. Jezebeth arrives, threatens her for the amulet. A grand plan is in place to take over this world and the one beyond (i.e. real world). Daphne is threatened with violence but stays strong, says the amulet is somewhere she'll never get it. Not true, says Jezebeth. Her witchy diving powers say that it's near, close.
15. Darwin, Melora and Gorloch lead Hazelnut through the countryside. Gorloch is horrified to learn that Daphne has written about him in her world, profiting from his misery. Darwin spots the butterfly he saw in the opening scene and is once again fascinated. But it's a spy, works like a camera so Jezebeth sees Darwin, but more importantly the amulet around his neck.

16. Jezebeth sends a pink bunny stampede. Gorloch tries to use magic to create a force field around our heroes but his magic is weak; since the divorce he hasn't really practiced much. They have to make a run for it and barely escape.
17. Jezebeth is furious at the bunny general for failing. She kills him...with magic.
18. That night over a campfire, Darwin and Gorloch bond over their shared dislike of Daphne. They trade stories of the various times she has screwed them over, each story one-upping the last. Darwin wins. Melora is confused by this new light shed on Daphne but definitely doesn't trust Gorloch as part of the traveling party. She does not sleep that night.
19. They trek across Elnoria, hitting every possible type of climate in a quick series of shots: desert, marsh, mountains, rain forest, arctic tundra. They encounter something magical at each stage that Melora loves but Darwin can explain away with science.
20. Darwin and group reach the Ice Fortress and sneak in thanks to Gorloch.
21. Darwin rescues Daphne, who is initially shocked to learn that Gorloch is working on her side now. She tries to kill him, assuming he's in on the plot. Darwin stops her. Actually, Daphne is pissed that Darwin is even here. That means he brought the Amulet, which can't be good. They better get out of there before Jezebeth finds them.

Reel 5: Jezebeth turns the tables

22. Quickly escaping, Gorloch catches a glimpse of his ex-wife and falls back in love, and we get the feeling he might sacrifice his new found friends at the chance to win her back. Gorloch lingers a bit too long and they're spotted. Jezebeth sends the fairy assassins after them. Some hilarious stuff with Hazelnut. Darwin and crew barely escape the Ice Fortress alive.
23. On the run from Jezebeth's minions, backtracking through all those various climates from earlier, Daphne and Darwin argue about how to proceed. Melora tries to mediate but fails.
24. The arguing slows them down until they are surrounded by the fairy assassins. Jezebeth arrives and demands the amulet, but Darwin and Daphne ignore her, continue their bickering. Jezebeth gets fed up, demands their attention through a scary display of dark magic. Holy crap. Jezebeth gets the amulet and vanishes through a portal along with her assassins. Daphne just glares at Darwin. So now what?
25. Jezebeth enters into our world, starts causing havoc. Her plan is to destroy society by rendering technology useless, bringing us back to the dark ages and then ruling through magic. She does this in a very visual way. Like octopus bombs.

Reel 6: Back to the real world

26. In Elnoria. Without the amulet, they're stuck here. Unable to do anything. Although...Melora recalls a cryptic message in one of the books, speaking of another way to cross worlds. Yes, Gorloch knows the way.
27. They arrive at this secret "back door" into Elnoria. But they can't figure out how to access it. Darwin uses his scientific knowledge to make it work. Daphne grimaces. Lucky. Daphne wants to do this alone, but Darwin insists on helping. And bringing Gorloch and Hazelnut, two allies whom he now trusts. Maybe Mr. Tufnil comes along too.
28. Our heroes arrive to find the real world in disarray. Daphne wants to use magic to destroy Jezebeth, but Darwin has another idea. It's decision time. Who do we go with? Well, Daphne's the one with experience. Darwin is upset, strikes off on his own with Hazelnut.
29. Daphne and crew attempt to stop Jezebeth, but Daphne's magic does not work. That was the price of using the back door exit to Elnoria. Gorloch knew this all along. Having effectively put Daphne out of commission, Jezebeth rewards Gorloch by taking him back. Daphne becomes injured and Melora helps her escape.
30. British leaders (including the Queen) surrender to Jezebeth. Technology is dead. Long live magic.

ACT THREE

Reel 7: The final Battle

31. Darwin works with Daphne to stop Jezebeth using basic science (magnets, static electricity, etc) to achieve the same results as Daphne's magic. What does Melora bring? She puts out a call to the Daphne Grimsby fan club, millions of kids strong, to act as their army, putting Darwin's plan into action all over London (using carrier pigeons – very old school).
32. Darwin's plan works but Jezebeth is uber-powerful. She's also pretty mean to Gorloch, treating him like crap again. But he's changed along this journey and stands up for himself. She blasts him down with an energy beam, sets her sights on Darwin and crew. Just as she's about to land the final blow, Gorloch switches Jezebeth's amulet with a fake one from Melora's collection of cheap fan art.
33. Daphne gets the real amulet and puts it into Darwin's proton laser device (this was his science fair project from Act One). Science and magic working together and Jezebeth is defeated.
34. Daphne has a new book where she shares the glory with the others. Darwin wins a Nobel Prize for his discovery that saved the day (and finally merged the two worlds). Melora has a gallery opening for her photographs taken along the journey. Gorloch wears a suit, has become official Ambassador to Elnoria. Happily ever after for all.

"Magic For Losers" Treatment #4 (FINAL) – 06/15/09

LOGLINE: When famous child wizard Daphne Grimsby is abducted from our world by villainous foes, her loser brother Darwin must reluctantly venture into the magical world to save her.

ACT ONE

Reel 1: Darwin and Daphne at odds

1. Action sequence of Daphne in Elnoria, as she battles the evil dark wizard Gorloch and his demon queen Jezebeth. They are formidable foes, but she defeats them. This should be funny and set the tone of movie.
2. Darwin reads from the book detailing the adventure. He and sister Daphne are in a limo, arguing over Daphne's merits.
3. Daphne and Darwin arrive at DaphneCon. Huge crowds in costumes, ready to spend tons of money of Daphne merchandise. We see movies and books and toys galore.
4. Daphne at a book signing, bored out of her mind.
5. Darwin bumps into super-fan Melora and for him, it's love at first sight. But it's not exactly mutual and, as always, Darwin says the wrong thing, pisses Melora off.
6. Daphne is being called back to Elnoria to deal with a situation. There's trouble brewing in Elnoria. She hops into a portal and is gone!

7. It's up to Darwin to break it to the rabid fans that Daphne isn't available for the meet and greet. It goes badly, he's booed offstage, harassed.

Reel 2: Darwin forced to be a hero

8. Darwin spots Melora, runs after her. He's trying one more time to win her over. This time he's a little more charming and they bond a little.
9. Suddenly, BAM! The portal to Elnoria opens. The fox with an eye-patch appears with the news that Daphne was abducted by the formidable fairy assassins. What? As Darwin argues with the fox about what to do, Melora stands transfixed, looking through the portal. The chance of a lifetime. She jumps through. He has no choice but to grab his sister's Amulet from the fox and follow her in. Whoosh! (Note: Daphne gave the fox the all-powerful Amulet with instructions to give it to Darwin to keep it safe.)
10. Darwin and Melora are now in Elnoria. She's totally geeking out and Darwin is trying to figure out how to use the amulet to get them back home. This does not work. They get ambushed by Mr. Tufnil, the wise guardian of the portal.
11. Realizing that they are friends of Daphne, Mr. Tufnil fills Darwin in on the situation. Daphne was indeed abducted by dark forces (we see this occur via his crystal ball or some such magic). Darwin is taken aback upon seeing this. Contrary to what he believed prior, Daphne is in REAL danger here. This fantasy world is not all fun and games.

12. Melora immediately takes charge. She knows the way, the map of Elnoria all but burned in her brain. Tufnil offers them a unicorn for the journey, but this turns out not to be the beautiful Ambrosia but the half-retarded one, Hazelnut. Darwin hesitates, but follows after her.

ACT TWO

Reel 3: Teaming up with Gorloch

13. On the journey to the mountain where Gorloch's dark castle looms, Melora warns Darwin about the dark wizard and his soul-stealing, bloodthirsty ways.
14. They reach the castle but soon find Gorloch to be a shell of his former self. When Gorloch learns that Darwin plans to rescue Daphne and defeat Jezebeth, he offers his help. He wants to see his ex-wife humiliated. Darwin welcomes the assistance but Melora thinks it's a bad idea.

Reel 4: The quest to rescue Daphne

15. Daphne in a prison cell. Jezebeth arrives, threatens her for the amulet. A grand plan is in place to take over this world and the one beyond (i.e. real world). Daphne is threatened with violence but stays strong, says the amulet is somewhere she'll never get it. Not true, says Jezebeth. Her witchy diving powers say that it's near, close.
16. Darwin, Melora and Gorloch lead Hazelnut through the countryside. Gorloch is horrified to learn that Daphne has written about him in her

- world, profiting from his misery. Hazelnut spots a butterfly and is fascinated. But it's a spy, works like a camera so Jezebeth sees Darwin, but more importantly the amulet around his neck.
17. Jezebeth sends a kitten stampede. Gorloch tries to use magic to create a force field around our heroes but his magic is weak; since the divorce he hasn't really practiced much. They have to make a run for it and barely escape.
18. That night over a campfire, Darwin and Gorloch bond over their shared dislike of Daphne. They trade stories of the various times she has screwed them over, each story one-upping the last. Darwin wins. Melora is confused by this new light shed on Daphne but definitely doesn't trust Gorloch as part of the traveling party. She does not sleep that night.
19. They trek across Elnoria, hitting every possible type of climate in a quick series of shots: desert, marsh, mountains, rain forest, arctic tundra. They encounter something magical at each stage that Melora loves but Darwin tries to desperately explain it all away with science.
20. Darwin and group reach the Ice Fortress and sneak in thanks to Gorloch.
21. Darwin rescues Daphne, who is initially shocked to learn that Gorloch is working on her side now. She tries to kill him, assuming he's in on the plot. Darwin stops her. Actually, Daphne is pissed that Darwin is even here. That means he brought the Amulet, which can't be good. They better get out of there before Jezebeth finds them.

Reel 5: Jezebeth turns the tables

22. Quickly escaping, Gorloch catches a glimpse of his ex-wife and falls back in love, and betrays his newfound friends at the chance to win her back. Some hilarious stuff with Hazelnut, slowing them down with his ineptness.
23. On the run from Jezebeth's minions, Daphne and Darwin argue about how to proceed. Melora tries to mediate but fails.
24. The arguing slows them down until the fairy assassins surround them. Jezebeth arrives and demands the amulet, but Darwin and Daphne ignore her, continue their bickering. Jezebeth gets fed up, demands their attention through a scary display of dark magic. Holy crap. Jezebeth grabs Darwin, holds him at wand-point. Daphne gives up the amulet and Jezebeth vanishes through a portal along with her assassins. Daphne just glares at Darwin.
25. Jezebeth and Gorloch enter into our world, start causing havoc. Her plan is to destroy society by rendering technology useless, bringing us back to the dark ages and then ruling through magic. She does this in a very visual way. Like octopus bombs.

Reel 6: Back to the real world

26. In Elnoria. Without the amulet, they're stuck here. Unable to do anything. Although...Darwin finds a cryptic message in one of the books, speaking of another way to cross worlds.

27. They arrive at this secret “back door” into Elnoria. Darwin and Daphne come to terms with each other (sort of) and then Daphne figures out how to get back to their world, but involves destroying the Cave of Lost Oblivion.
28. Our heroes arrive to find the real world in disarray. Daphne wants to use magic to destroy Jezebeth, but Darwin has another idea. It’s decision time. Who do we go with? Well, Daphne’s the one with experience. Darwin is upset, strikes off on his own with Hazelnut. Melora hesitates, but follows after Darwin.
29. Daphne attempts to stop Jezebeth, but Daphne’s magic is not powerful enough without the amulet. Gorloch betrays Daphne, injuring her. Jezebeth rewards Gorloch by taking him back. The evil couple reunited once more as Daphne escapes.
30. World leaders surrender to Jezebeth. Technology is dead. Long live magic.

ACT THREE

Reel 7: The final Battle

31. Darwin figures out how to stop Jezebeth using the toy versions of the Amulet sold in bookstores.
32. Jezebeth is uber-powerful. She’s also pretty mean to Gorloch, treating him like crap again. But he’s changed along this journey and stands up for himself. She blasts him down with an energy beam, sets her sights

- on Darwin and crew. Just as she's about to land the final blow, Gorloch switches Jezebeth's amulet with a fake one.
33. Daphne gets the real amulet and chooses to destroy it, even though that means that she can never go back to Elnoria. Jezebeth is defeated.
34. Daphne has a new book where she shares the glory with the others. Happily ever after for all.

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Vita

Scott Gordon Miles was born in the slightly odd little town of Kilgore, Texas on January 4, 1979. He completed his undergrad education at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX. While there, he became the first student in university history to write and direct a feature film while enrolled in the Cinematography program. The zombie romantic comedy "Dead Flesh" was released on DVD in 2002 after several festival screenings. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts in 2001. After a few years working in the Texas film industry, he entered the Graduate School University of Texas at Austin in 2007 to pursue a Masters of Fine Arts in screenwriting.

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The report was typed by the author.